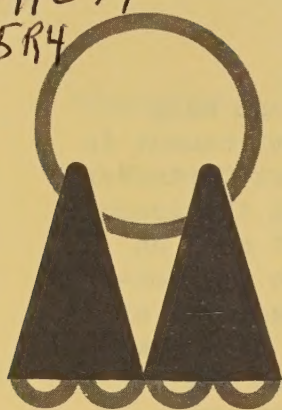


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RESPONSE

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A Report on Actions for A Better Environment

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RESPONSE is a periodic report from the United States Department of Agriculture on USDA's many areas of action to remedy environmental problems. Department programs protect and improve the environment through research, forestry, conservation and a wide range of rural and community services.

NEW PROGRAM OF PEST MANAGEMENT

A new Federally sponsored expanded pest management program is expected to reduce the danger to farmers and farm workers from pesticides and to help protect the environment from the effects of currently-used pesticides. Since cotton accounts for a substantial part of the DDT and other pesticides used on agricultural crops each year, it will be the focal point of the new effort. A total of \$2,250,000 in USDA allocations are earmarked for the on-the-farm pest management program in all major cotton producing States in 1972. Scouts will be trained to identify and estimate insect populations of both harmful and beneficial insects in cotton. They will determine when the insect populations have reached the point where use of chemicals is absolutely necessary to avoid major crop damage. This procedure can substantially reduce amounts of DDT and other pesticides used in this and subsequent years. The release of predators and parasite wasps, the release of sterile males, the introduction of cultural controls such as destroying crop debris that might harbor pests, and the application of limited amounts of non-persistent insecticides late in the season to interrupt life cycles also will be part of the program.

WATCHING FOR HERBICIDE RESIDUES

Herbicides are vital to controlling tall-growing plants on powerline rights-of-way in the Pacific Northwest. To insure that their use of herbicide does not result in deterioration of forest or aquatic environments Forest Service scientists have initiated a soil and water monitoring program for the Bonneville Power Administration. Water samples from streams flowing through treated areas as well as soil samples are collected at intervals up to 4 years after spraying to determine the movement and persistence of herbicide residues. Spray practices are adjusted to minimize the effects of chemical sprays on non-target organisms.

PROGRESS IN
ENVIRONMENTAL
THRUST

The Environmental Thrust Campaign to encourage and help citizens and groups clean up and protect the environment is making progress since it was started by USDA last September. Department personnel discussed the campaign with the leaders of many national organizations likely to support such an effort. Responses to these introductions to the environmental thrust campaign included commitments by several of the largest farm and marketing organizations to undertake large scale projects in line with those listed in the Department's Environmental Thrust Handbook. Similar commitments from business and environmental organizations were made as a result of the USDA campaign. If you have not already requested an Environmental Thrust Handbook from the Editor of RESPONSE, you may wish to.

SUPPORTING
PARATHION SAFETY

A safe-use campaign is going into its second year in 41 States in support of using the potent pesticide parathion safely. The objective of the program is to make sure that all users of ethyl parathion understand the potential dangers and act to protect themselves, others, and the environment. APHS

PUBLIC ACCESS
EXPERIMENT

This year in 50 counties in 10 States farmers participating in the 1972 set-aside program will be offered additional payments by USDA if they will permit free public access to their lands for hunting, fishing, hiking or trapping. The payments for this program will be limited to \$1.5 million, enough for about 5,000 farmer agreements to participate in the public access program. If the program proves workable, millions of acres of farmland across the Nation may be opened for public recreational uses. ASCS

OUTDOOR
CLASSROOMS

A new 21-page illustrated booklet, "Outdoor Classrooms on School Sites" suggests subjects for outdoor classroom study and also tells how to get started, how to prepare a plan for the use of a school site, and where to get professional help in applying conservation practices. Single copies of the booklet are available upon request to the Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. SCS

REAP FUNDS
INCREASED

Last month Secretary Butz announced that an additional \$55 1/2 million had been made available for the 1972 Rural Environmental Assistance Program. This will augment the initial allocation of \$140 million for the 1972 program. The increase is to help mend the expanding demand in rural areas for funds for pollution abatement practices. ASCS

WATER BANK
ADVISORY

Secretary Butz has appointed 19 persons to serve 2-year terms on the Water Bank Advisory Board. They will advise him on administering the Water Bank Program, an effort to encourage farmers to restore and improve the migratory waterfowl-producing wetlands of the Nation.

WORKSHOPS

"Implementing Practical Pest Management Strategies" is the theme of the National Extension Insect-Pest Management Workshop, March 14-16, at Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana. A Workshop on Livestock Waste Management is being held March 13-15 at Fort Collins, Colorado, sponsored by the Great Plains Agricultural Council. Also, the published proceedings are now available of the First National Symposium on Animal Wastes Management held at Warrenton, Virginia, last September. Cost is \$6.50. Write to the editor of RESPONSE for further details.

DIRECT INJECTION FOR TREE DISEASE

USDA scientists are making a research breakthrough in the control of tree diseases. They are developing a technique for injecting a fungicide (benomyl) directly into diseased trees. This work, being done at the Northeastern Forest Experiment Station Laboratory at Delaware, Ohio, should greatly improve the effectiveness of chemicals used in treatment of Dutch elm disease and wilts of oak and maple. The procedure not only has economic and physical advantages over treatments through the soil, but helps to avoid environmental pollution hazards of other systems. FS

CONSERVATION SLIDE SERIES

"Consider the Soil First," a new color slide series shows how soil-depleting, costly misuse of land can be avoided through the use of soil surveys. Primary audiences for the presentation are land developers, engineers, zoning officials, land-use planners, homeowners, and educators. The 73-slide set may be purchased for \$13.50 from the Photography Division, Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. A filmstrip is available for \$7.50 from Photo Lab., Inc. 3825 Georgia Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20011. A cassette recording of the narration is available for \$3 from either source. Two copies of an illustrated narrative guide are supplied with each set purchased. SCS

NEW SPOT SPRAYER

USDA engineers at Stoneville, Mississippi, have field tested an automatic control device used with direct spray equipment, which cuts herbicides for post-emergence weed control by as much as 60 percent. Powered by a 12-volt tractor battery it sprays short bursts of herbicide at the base of cotton plants as a sensor triggers a solenoid valve. Pesticide drift is also reduced. Weed control between plants is done by regular cross-plowing of the 40-inch pattern of cultivation. ARS

HEARTLAND HEADACHE

The days when U.S. agricultural quarantine inspectors watched only our borders for pests that could attack our agriculture are long gone. Increased passenger arrivals in the agricultural heartland of the United States are raising risks to our agriculture. Last year, approximately 2,500 passenger flights from abroad landed at 43 interior locations. Aboard were 7 1/2 percent of all air passengers from abroad.

DEVELOPING
CRITICAL COVER

Yucca, panstamon, petalostemon, mountain mahogany, and several varieties of sunflowers are among the forbs and shrubs being tested and developed for use in grass seeding mixtures. The improved plants will be used on critical erosion areas such as road embankments and strip mine areas. The research is going on at SCS plant materials centers in Manhattan, Kansas; Knox City, Texas; Las Lunas, New Mexico; and Pleasanton, California.

HUNTERS TO
BRING 'EM
BACK

Government and industry are together on a program to get hunters to return their litter from the woods to be re-cycled. The first such project is to take place in Washington's Snoqualmie National Forest this fall. As many as 105,000 deer and elk hunters will be asked to sort out their litter into three bags--aluminum, glass and all other--and take them to any of seventeen litter deposit stations. Forest Service will provide posters, garbage cans, litter bags and printed information to the hunters.

FLYING RAIN
BARRELL HELPS

A plane called the Cl-215 is proving a valuable tool in curbing destructive wildfires. An amphibian, it can scoop 1,440-gallon loads of water while skimming across a lake or bay surface. In Oklahoma last year one plane made 27 drops (37,400 gallons) in one hour and 40 minutes, suppressing a 600-acre grass and brush fire. In that State the Cl-215 was used to fight 39 brush fires and was credited with bringing 33 of them under control. In addition it can be used in aerial survey, spraying, transport, making it the only new multi-purpose amphibian built in over 20 years.

PLAINS WIND
EROSION DOWN

According to the USDA's first wind erosion report for the 1971-72 blow season, wind erosion in the 10-State plains area is much below that of last winter. A total of 298,197 acres were wind damaged this winter compared to 1,781,675 acres a year ago, a reduction of almost 600 percent. Adequate rainfall at the right time, along with good snow cover and the application of emergency tillage are major reasons for the improvement. Copies of the 1-page report on recent Plains wind erosion are available from the editor of RESPONSE.

FEEDLOT
ODOR CONTROL

Research on the feeding habits of deer in Colorado may have uncovered an idea for controlling feedlot odors. Scientists are finding that chopped sagebrush added to the diets of fattening steers reduce feedlot odors. The additive has no adverse effect on feed efficiency, carcass quality, or taste of the meat. Oils in the sagebrush change the make-up of the bacterial population in the animals' digestive tracts, modifying waste odors. Write the Director, SAES, Fort Collins, Colorado 80521, if you want more details.